



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

Mountain
Plains
Region

1244 Speer Boulevard
Room 903
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Reply to

Attn. of: SP 94-C-31

NOV 8 1993

Subject: Varying Reduced Price Charges Within a School District

To: STATE AGENCY DIRECTORS - Colorado ED, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri ED,
(Special Nutrition Programs) Montana OPI, Nebraska ED, North Dakota,
South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming ED

USDA policy has not allowed varying reduced price charges within a school district. However, we have recently received an interpretation from the National Office which changes this policy.

Part 245.3(b)(2) states that within the jurisdiction of a school food authority all children from a family shall be provided the same benefits. For reduced price meals, "the same benefit" is interpreted to mean eligibility for reduced price meals, rather than eligibility for reduced price meals at a specific price. In other words, all eligible children from a family receive the same benefit, a meal, at less than full price. Therefore, a school district should be allowed the discretion to vary the reduced price meal charge within the maximum limit allowed, provided there is no discrimination in the establishment of the charge. As with full priced meals, the school district may have a higher reduced price charge in high schools than in elementary schools to account for larger serving sizes for older students.

If school food authorities are prohibited from varying the reduced price charge, many will charge all students the maximum rate. Allowing a school food authority to charge elementary students less than the maximum reduced price charge encourages participation and is beneficial to households.

Please let us know if you have any questions regarding this change in policy.

Ann C. Hector
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